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montana committee for the humanities

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newsletter

Volume 10, No. 2

Winter, 1984

New Faces

Dr. Ron Perrin is the newly-elected Chair of the Montana Committee for the Humanities. He is Professor of Political Theory in the Political Science Department at the University of Montana, Missoula. Dr. Perrin holds degrees in philosophy from Northwestern University and the University of California, San Diego, where he wrote his doctoral dissertation under the direction of Herbert Marcuse. He has published numerous articles in philosophy and political science journals, and is currently at work on a book concerned with the future prospects for democracy in America. He has been a vital member of the Committee for three years, and served as its vice-chair in 1983.

Our new Vice-Chair is Dr. Marvin Shaw, Professor of Religious Studies in the Department of History and Philosophy at Montana State University, Bozeman. Dr. Shaw has a BA in philosophy from Occidental College, a Masters in Divinity from Union Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Columbia University. He has published articles in philosophy and religious studies journals, and has just complete a book in comparative religion called *The Paradox of Intention*. Dr. Shaw recently received the Fridley Distinguished Teaching Award from MSU, and was also elected as a Danforth Associate. He has served as a Committee member for two years.



Ron Perrin, right, and Marvin Shaw, left, new MCH Chair and Vice-Chair.

1984 in Montana

The Committee recognizes that interest in Orwell's novel will be at a high level this year, and that many Montana groups and organizations will be interested in projects related to Orwell, to 1984, and to issues raised by the book. We'd like to hear from scholars who are interested and willing to participate in public programs. Letters and phone calls are welcome. MCH staff persons will try to help connect scholars with groups or organizations expressing interest in any topics relating to 1984.

The Montana Committee for the Humanities has funded a symposium on aspects of George Orwell's 1984, to be held at the College of Great Falls on February 25, 1984. The title of the one-day program is " 'War is Peace' in 1984: Political Prophecy, Geopolitics, and Human Values." Speakers include scholars in history, literature, and religious studies, and representatives of the military and diverse citizens' groups.

The proceedings of the symposium will be taped, and available for distribution at a later date. For further information, call Professor John Hart, project director, at (406) 761-8210.

Welcome New MCH Members

The Montana Committee for the Humanities has elected five new members, each to serve a four-year term beginning January 1, 1984. They replace outgoing members Carolyn Ennis, community projects coordinator from Billings; Bill Tietz, President of Montana State University, Bozeman; Walt Gulick, Professor of Philosophy from Eastern Montana College, Billings; Jim Oppedahl of the legislative council, Helena; and Mary Moore, recently of Glasgow, who resigned to accept a position at the Washington State Library in Olympia. The Committee is most appreciative of the fine service performed by each of these persons, and wishes to express particular appreciation to Carolyn Ennis, who chaired the Committee with energy, grace, and style during 1983.

The Committee is pleased to announce the election of the following persons, who begin their four year terms in January, 1984:

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Neil S. Bucklew. Neil Bucklew, President of the University of Montana and professor of economics, received his Ph.D. in industrial relations and economics from the University of Wisconsin. His M.S. and B.A. degrees were earned in political science, history and literature. Before coming to Montana in 1981, Dr. Bucklew was Provost at Ohio University. He has written extensively on the subject of collective bargaining, and has served as an arbitrator in numerous labor-management negotiations. As President of the University, Dr. Bucklew is the major public spokesperson for Montana's largest liberal arts institution. In his two years as President, Dr. Bucklew has re-affirmed and expanded the University of Montana's traditional mission to provide a strong liberal arts foundation for all of its students.

Jean Dahlman. Jean Dahlman lives on a cattle and wheat ranch near Forsyth. She holds a Master's Degree in French from the University of Montana in Missoula, and a B.A. in English from Gonzaga University. Ms. Dahlman has done graduate work in English at Middlebury College, and has earned a "Certificate Normal" in the Cours de Civilization Francaise at the Sorbonne in Paris. She served as Chair of the Foreign Language Department at the Colorado Academy in Denver and taught French for a number of years in Missoula, Denver, and Forsyth. She has an extensive background in the arts, and she is active in politics, theatre, and adult education groups.

Margaret S. Davis of Helena comes to the Committee with a B.A. in Literature from Scripps College in Claremont, California. Her extensive background includes teaching English to native German speakers, and working as a researcher for an historian. Ms. Davis has long been active in civic affairs and the arts. She has just completed a two-year term as state president of the League of Women Voters of Montana. Ms. Davis has served as Chairperson of the Montana Historical Society Docents, and is on the board of directors of the Helena Symphony Society. She is also active with the Margaret Hibbard Fine Arts Center, the Helena Arts Council, and the Montana Historical Society Friends. Maggie Davis is an accomplished artist, with numerous prizes to her credit.

David L. Irving is a native Montanan who recently returned to Glasgow to establish his law practice. He earned his Juris Doctor degree from Notre Dame Law School. His bachelor's degree in philosophy was awarded with high honors by Jamestown College in North Dakota, and he read political philosophy for his M.A. at the University of Durham in England. Mr. Irving has also studied at Harvard University, the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, and the Hastings College of Law in San Francisco. Mr. Irving is active as a sponsor of the Fort Peck Summer Theatre and the Glasgow Council of Fine Arts.

Michael P. Malone. Michael P. Malone is Dean of Graduate Studies and Professor of History at Montana State University. He received his Ph.D. in American

Studies with an emphasis on History from Washington State University. Dr. Malone is a Trustee and Vice President of the Museum of the Rockies, and the Montana Historical Society. He serves as review editor of *Montana*, *The Magazine of Western History*, and is on the boards of editors of other regional professional journals. He has written numerous articles on western and Montana subjects. His book *Montana: A History of Two Centuries* (co-authored with former Montana Committee for the Humanities member Richard Roeder) is a highly regarded study of the state, and his 1981 book *The Battle for Butte: Mining and Politics on the Northern Frontier, 1864-1906* was awarded a prize in history by the University of Washington. Currently, Dr. Malone is collaborating with others on a comprehensive history of the western United States.

A New Voice

Those of you who make frequent phone calls to the MCH offices in Missoula will no longer notice how much Connie Dwyer sounds like Margaret Kingsland. With deep regrets, Connie resigned in January to accompany Ed Dwyer to a new position in Reno, Nevada. Connie's performance as the director's Administrative Assistant for three years was outstanding. We wish her the best.

The new voice in the office belongs to Holly Goff, an Idaho native and a veteran of five years work with a large Missoula law firm.

Videotapes Available

We are pleased to announce that a number of new MCH-funded videotapes are now available for use in discussion groups, classes, or community programs. Simply write to us, care of Instructional Materials Services, University of Montana, Missoula, 59812. These tapes are available free of charge on a first-come, first-served basis.

We urge program planners to take advantage of MCH mini-grant opportunities to obtain both a humanities "product" such as one of these productions, and a humanities discussion leader.

"FIFTY YEARS FROM NOW"

Jeanette Rankin: The Woman Who Voted 'No' (28:30)

There is a very moving shot of her, sitting in the House of Representatives, alone, looking downcast. You can almost feel the weight on her shoulders, the heaviness in her heart. She had tried to get the Speaker's attention to explain her vote, but to no avail. She was hissed, booed, and cursed, and later had to phone for the police to escort her back to her office. She was Jeanette Rankin, the Congresswoman from Montana, and she had done it again — voted against going to war.

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Jeanette Rankin: *The Woman Who Voted 'No'* highlights much of Miss Rankin's political life, from 1916 to 1968. It was a remarkable career — the first woman ever elected to Congress; the only person to vote 'no' on America's entry into both world wars; a leading lobbyist for the peace movement between the wars; and the leader (at 88) of a women's march in Washington, DC against the war in Vietnam. When asked at the latter event what she hoped to accomplish, she replied, "Can't they see this tremendous number of women, expressing this deep emotion against the war, can't do anything but help?"

For much of her political life, though, Jeanette Rankin was alone. Elected as a suffragist, she planned to use her position in Congress to highlight the conditions of women. She never got the chance; on her first day in office, President Wilson asked for a Declaration of War. During the campaign she had favored neutrality. Now, she was pressured to vote each way. She felt she owed it to the suffragist movement to vote for the war — but she could not. There was a huge uproar when she voted no. Suffragists were "awfully upset." Some vocal constituents thought she should resign, and the press said she was weak and sentimental for voting against the war. Told she had ruined her career, she replied she didn't care about that, but about "50 years from now."

We are told that her first vote against going to war determined the direction of the rest of her life. If she was not clearly a pacifist before April 2, 1917, she was on that date, and forever after. According to one of her aides, by the late 1930's, Rankin's pacifism had become "a beautiful obsession." When she no longer felt effective as a lobbyist, she returned to Montana from Georgia, where she made her home for two decades, and ran again for Congress.

She was re-elected by a comfortable margin. Following her vote against America's entry into World War II, she was flooded by "vicious, vilifying letters," mostly from Montana, and the State GOP urged her to change her vote — "to redeem Montana's honor." Of course, she did not, and after her term ended, she slipped into near obscurity.

The music in this production is a dreamy, light, ragtime piano. It is not an accompaniment, though, but a counter-point. Few political careers are launched on a deeply felt act of conscience, and fewer still sustained. There was nothing dreamy about Jeanette Rankin's dedication, and nothing easy about her career. She would be pleased, no doubt, by the growing number of people in the peace movement worldwide — more than fifty years after she cast her first and lasting vote against war.

Jeanette Rankin: *The Woman Who Voted 'No'*

funded by MCH and the Georgia Endowment for the Humanities

Produced by Ronald Bayley and Nancy Landgren of the Fine Tuning company, Bozeman, is available on videotape.

A GREAT NOISE

Baasaxpilua: Northern Plains Celebration (58:11)

Baasaxpilua — a wonderful word to pronounce — means "to make a great noise," and this hour-long production does just that. Filmed over a two-year period, it documents the history and life of the annual inter-tribal celebration held each August in Crow Agency, Montana.

The original idea eighty years ago was to stage an annual agricultural fair to see who raised the best horses and the best produce, in the manner of county fairs everywhere. Chief Plenty Coups and other Crow leaders insisted that parades and dancing, too, were appropriate expressions of Crow culture, and should be incorporated in the Crow Fair.

Now, Baasaxpilua describes a gathering where "good thoughts and feelings are shared by all." People come together to remember what it means to be a Crow, to gather as clan members, and to celebrate. It is the largest and most spectacular Indian fair in the country, with participants from "all over the world, and other places," as Barney Old Coyote puts it.

The Crows were traditionally a hunting culture, like all Plains Indians, and much of the fair symbolizes that. Tribes used to move every three days, with a parade chief in charge; at the fair, there is a parade with a parade chief, 30 to 40 highly decorated floats, and several hundred horses. There are horse races — the fair used to be called "running in a circle" — and an all-Indian rodeo, which recently attracted over 800 participants. (A voice reminds us that the first cowboys were Indians.) Traditional dress is important and nowhere more spectacularly so than on the dancers, for whom feathers, furs, skins and bells (replacing hooves of deer, or buffalo) serve as reminders that "we come from the animal world, and are a part of it." Finally, the tipis — close to a thousand — the camping out, the food, the singing, dancing, and constant drumming, all "gives you a good Indian feeling."

We are told that the Crows are the most traditional tribe, but also the most assimilated. The contrasts are striking — a young girl in full dress, blowing bubble gum; parade floats consisting of cars and trucks, entirely draped with blankets and robes, even the windshields; a baby with Coke; dance contestants wearing numbers provided by a western beer; and one head-to-foot shot of a richly garbed dancer — from eagle feathers down to Adidas.

For the Crow, Baasaxpilua is a celebration of cultural identity, a renewal, a rejuvenation. One grandmother remembers the very first fair, and a much younger woman closes the videotape saying, "I'll always come back — I'm a Crow Indian."

Baasaxpilua: Northern Plains Celebration

Funded by MCH and The Colorado Humanities Program

Produced by the Denver Museum of Natural History
58:11 Color videotape

BLACK ROBES

The Mission Event: Roots of Montana's Pluralistic Tradition (29:30)

There are many religious denominations in Montana, but the Catholic Church, with historic missions throughout the state, numerous parochial schools, hospitals, and two colleges, has had a particularly important impact on the state. And you may have wondered, just how did it happen that Montana ended up with so many missions? Why did the Black Robes come, and what have been the consequences?

In late 1981 a conference was held in Missoula to consider these questions, combining speakers with several exhibits of artifacts and art — including the remarkable paintings done by Father Nicholas Point in the early 1840's. The videotaping of the conference was more or less an afterthought, and one might reasonably expect to be a little bored by the constraints of a conference format. However, slices of presentations at the conference are mixed with paintings, old photographs, and brief descriptions of some of the missions in Montana; they are blended with excellent editing, and served with brisk continuity in the videotape entitled *The Mission Event*, and available now to Montanans.

The coming of the Black Robes was foretold by Shining Shirt long before an Iroquois religious leader named Ignace la Mousse persuaded the Flatheads in 1831 to send a delegation to St. Louis to ask that priests be sent to Montana Territory. Their journey was successful — in 1840 Father Pierre de Smet met the Flatheads at the Green River Rendezvous. The Black Robes came because they were invited. They stayed because de Smet persuaded his superiors that the Jesuits were wanted and needed.

The first mission was St. Mary of the Rocky Mountains, near Stevensville. The teaching of religion began at once, long before any permanent buildings were completed. The Black Robes also taught the sedentary arts of agriculture, gardening, and some animal husbandry. The Jesuits were in constant contact with the Indians, as well as in constant motion: between 1841 and 1911, 10 missions were built around the state.

Two striking images: the first is a Catholic prayer offered at the conference by Flathead spiritual leader Johnny Arlee — in Salish, with subtitles. The second is an account of Benjamin Black Elk's funeral. Like his father, Benjamin had become a practicing Catholic, but he continued his traditional religious practices as well. At his own request, he was buried in a dark blue pin-stripe suit, wearing beaded mocassins. He wore a neck tie, and a braided wig with an eagle feather. Finally, in one hand was a rosary — in the other, a sacred pipe.

The Mission Event: Roots of Montana's Pluralistic Tradition

Funded by MCH

Produced by Montanans for Quality Television
is a 29:30 minute videotape.

ALPHABET SOUP

"Relief for Depression in the 30's" (10 min.)

"Montana 1930: The Native American Experience" (9 min.)

"Depression and Recovery in Montana: The Decade of the 30's" (28 min.)

A few years ago, "Depression and Recovery" would have played well to high school history classes. Now, it is of much wider interest — the similarities and contrasts between the '30's and the '80's give us perspectives on our current situation.

The opening words of the film: "I don't think the generations since the '30's have fully grasped the amount of poverty here." We see skies filled with blowing dust and swarms of locusts. By the beginning of the '30's farmers already had suffered natural disasters, low prices, and depressed markets for 10 years. Many had gone bankrupt. What most of them felt when the stock market crashed in 1929 is not recorded here, but it is grimly imaginable. By 1935 fully a fourth of the state's population was on relief.

That is one contrast. Another is the role played by government. Now, we are told by Washington, government is the problem. Then, it was a large part of the solution. Montana received more federal dollars per capita than any other state save one. Nourished back to health by government programs, Montana became awash in alphabet soup.

The three productions on this tape were designed to complement the opening of the exhibit of Depression-era artifacts at the Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman, now a permanent installation. The first two are interesting though fragmentary, and parts of them are incorporated in the 28 minute videotape, "Depression and Recovery," which stands well on its own.

Depression and Recovery

Funded by MCH

28 minute videotape produced by the MSU Film and TV Department

Other recent MCH-funded productions include *The Drum Is the Heart*, a program on Blackfeet heritage and celebrations, and two videotapes on problems of incest and child abuse. All are currently available through the MCH collection at the Instructional Materials Service, University of Montana, Missoula, 59812. Productions which will be completed this winter include a half-hour videotape on author A. B. Guthrie's life and work, and *Wilderness Journal*, a one-hour documentary on concepts of wilderness and the lure of wild places.

The MCH will consider video applications at any time during the year, but applications for funds for the production of films will be considered only once a year.

The deadline for film applications is April 1, 1984.

Calendar of Forthcoming MCH Events

- FEBRUARY 21-24, 1984** — "Indians of the 80's" — Resource Person: Ada Deer — Billings, EMC — Contact: Deborah LaCounte — 657-2182
- FEBRUARY 25, 1984** — " 'War is Peace' in 1984: Political Prophecy, Geopolitics and Human Values" — Great Falls, College of Great Falls — Contact: John Hart — 761-8210, ext. 314
- APRIL 9-14, 1984** — "Indians of the 80's" — Resource Person: Kevin Red Star — Billings, EMC — Contact: Deborah LaCounte — 657-2182
- MAY 13-17, 1984** — "Indians of the 80's" — Resource Person: Terry Tafoya — Billings, EMC — Contact: Deborah LaCounte — 657-2182
- MAY 17-18, 1984** — "Standards and Limits for Judicial Decision Making — A Conference in Jurisprudence" — Missoula, UM — Contact: Thomas P. Huff — 243-2491
- SEPTEMBER 9** — "The Human Side of Energy: Stories of Rosebud County" — Billings — Contact: Bill Monahan — 248-4901
- TO BE ANNOUNCED** — "The Human Side of Energy: Stories of Rosebud County" — Miles City, Bozeman, Missoula, Great Falls, Helena, Colstrip — Contact: Bill Monahan — 248-4901

Grant Summary

The following grants have been awarded since April, 1983:

- Going Out West to See the Elephant**, sponsored by the Montana Historical Society. \$243.91.
- Mountains, Myths and Magic: A Film Festival**, sponsored by the Bridger Environmental Education Program. \$200.
- Women as Victims: Old Patterns, New Values**, sponsored by the Mercy Home of Great Falls. \$3,214.79.
- Heartland: Homesteading Days in Montana**, sponsored by Northern Montana College. \$279.40.
- Looking Back**, sponsored by the Montana Kidney Patient Association, \$75.
- Educational Services to Aid in Teaching Montana History in Secondary School Classrooms**, sponsored by the Montana Historical Society. \$2,222.
- Bozeman Centennial Women's History Project**, sponsored by MSU Women's Resource Center. \$4,284.
- Native American Religion in Prison**, sponsored by the North American Indian League, Montana State Prison. \$2,051.84.
- Traditions Revived — A Traditional Tribal Encampment**, sponsored by the Two Eagle River School, Flathead Cultural Committee, Indian Health Service, Mental Health, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Junior Tribal Council. \$2,-843.03.
- The Eye Juggler: Storytelling and the Living Culture of the Montana Indians**, sponsored by the Museum of the Plains Indians. \$150.
- The Eye Juggler: Storytelling and the Living Culture of the Montana Indians**, sponsored by Dull Knife Memorial College. \$294.30.
- Logon '83: Technology, Mythology and Literacy in the New Age**, sponsored by Logon '83 Committee, English Department, MSU. \$21,176.
- Tenth Annual Montana History Conference**, sponsored by the Montana Historical Society. \$6,550.
- The Women's West**, sponsored by the Institute of the American West and the Coalition for Western Women's History. \$1,615.52.
- A. B. Guthrie's Vanishing Paradise**, sponsored by the Center for Public Vision, Bozeman. \$9,149.66.
- Montana 4-H Congress**, submitted by the State 4-H Office, Bozeman. \$112.50.

- How the American System Works**, sponsored by the History Department, Flathead Valley Community College. \$150.
- How the American System Works**, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Kalispell. \$150.
- Mountains, Myths, Magic: A Film Festival**, sponsored by the Bridger Environmental Education Program. \$9,993.
- Smokejumpers, 1939 to the Present**, sponsored by the Aerial Fire Depot of Region 1, USFS, et al. \$669.
- Montana's Economic Development as if Women Mattered**, sponsored by the Bitterroot Educational Resources for Women. \$1,979.
- Going Out West to See the Elephant**, sponsored by the Kalispell Branch of Parents Without Partners. \$150.
- The Montana Woman: Her Legal and Social Situation**, sponsored by the Governor's Women and Employment Advisory Council. \$4,446.17.
- The Human Side of Energy: Stories from Rosebud County**, sponsored by the Western Heritage Center. \$6,357.
- Beyond the Bounds of Misery: Montana's Prison 1870-1940**. Sponsored by the Powell County Museum and Arts Foundation. \$338.45.
- The Eye Juggler: Storytelling and the Living Culture of the Montana Indian**, sponsored by the Missoula City-County Library. \$263.50.
- How the American System Works**, sponsored by the Musselshell County Historical Museum and RSVP. \$312.30.
- Thinking Positive about the Negative: A Wishful Vision of Our Very Long Run**, sponsored by Flathead Valley Community College. \$196.
- Montana Oral History Manuals**, sponsored by the Montana Oral History Association. \$100.
- Art as Propaganda**, sponsored by the Billings Branch of the AAUW. \$150.
- Music Forum**, sponsored by the Great Falls Symphony Association and the Great Falls Public Library. \$500.
- Perspectives on Nuclear Arms Race**, sponsored by the UM Environmental Studies Program, Educators for Social Responsibility, Associated Students of UM, UM Excellence Fund, Missoula Physicians for Social Responsibility, and UM Journalism School. \$9,990.
- Wings of Culture**, sponsored by the North American Indian Alliance. \$1,000.

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